



PRESS RELEASE
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For Immediate Release

Monday, February 28, 2005

OWNER OF AV-O2 TAMPA NIGHTCLUB

SENTENCED IN FEDERAL COURT

Tampa, FL - Late Friday afternoon U.S. District Judge Elizabeth A. Kovachevich sentenced Elias Edward Abusaid, aka "Lou", age 42, to eight years' imprisonment.

A jury found Abusaid guilty on December 9, 2004 of profiting from, and making available for use, an establishment for the purpose of unlawfully distributing and using a controlled substance . Abusaid is the owner of AV-O2 which is nightclub located at 1202 N. Franklin Street in downtown Tampa. The jury also found him guilty of being a felon in possession of ammunition.

On October 24, 2004 Abusaid was arrested at his nightclub during an overnight raid conducted by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and the Tampa Police Department and the U.S. Marshals Service. In addition to Abusaid's arrest, twenty individuals were also indicted on charges involving the distribution of MDMA, or more commonly known as "Ecstasy", as well as other controlled substances.

The evidence presented at trial revealed a year long investigation that involved numerous undercover purchases of "Ecstasy" from both employees of AV-02 and patrons inside the club. Also discussed during the trial were the activities occurring during the early morning hours AV-02 was open which appealed to ecstasy users and dealers.

This investigation was conducted by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and The Tampa Police Department. Also assisting was the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office, Pinellas County Sheriff's Office, Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE), and the U.S. Marshals Service. This case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Jim Preston.

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